



FIRST THINGS FIRST

Ready for School. Set for Life.

AGENDA ITEM: Responsible Governance Statement 2-101

BACKGROUND: As part of the Board's discussions in the fall 2011, there was a review of the Board's governance policies. Three of the four policies were revised and subsequently approved at the April 2012 Board meeting. There was Board discussion on governance policy 2-101—Responsible Governance Statement. Board members were concerned with a variety of aspects of the Statement.

Following the Board meeting, Vice Chair Thompson worked in collaboration with the CEO to draft a revised policy, which is attached.

RECOMMENDATION: The CEO recommends the Board discuss Responsible Governance Statement 2-101 as a third read and item for possible approval.

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board (First Things First) Governance Policies

2-101 Responsible Governance

Preamble

- We believe that every child in Arizona deserves the opportunity to arrive at school healthy and prepared to succeed.
- We believe that our role is to provide leadership, advocacy, public policies, programs and means to achieve this vision.
- We believe that the governance and administration of First Things First shall be conducted according to the laws of the State of Arizona in an open, transparent, ethical, cooperative and respectful manner.
- We believe that parents, families and communities are the core of early childhood development and health.

General Responsibilities of the Board

- The Board will provide the governance, leadership, oversight and vision for First Things First.
- The Board's only administrative function is to hire the Chief Executive Officer.
- Through the Chief Executive Officer the Board will work in partnership with Regional Partnership Councils, Tribal Governments, Staff and other organizations with similar goals.
- The Board will seek to achieve its Mission and Vision through comprehensive early childhood development and health systems.
- The Board recognizes that families and communities are the center of early childhood development and health decision-making.
- The Board supports the First Things First strategic directions developed through consensus of stakeholders.
- The Board recognizes as full members the three *ex-officio* members who are non-voting according to voter-approved statutes.

The Components of the First Things First Governance System

I. Responsible Governance

The board members of First Things First are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Arizona Senate as defined in statute to represent all citizens of the State of Arizona. There are three non-voting, *ex-officio* board members—the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Director of the Department of Economic Security and the Director of the Department of Health Services. In carrying out this function the Board recognizes the following responsibilities:

- Formulating and interpreting policies;
- Delegating administrative duties to the Chief Executive Officer;

- Making decisions on program and budget matters as recommended by the CEO; and
- Making a continuous appraisal of the program and administrative matters.

While the Board is charged by the State of Arizona and the voters with the responsibility for developing and enhancing programs to benefit early childhood development and health a planned pattern of authority is observed by the Board through delegating the administration of FTF to the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO then is held responsible to the Board for the execution of all of its approved policies and programs.

The following policies pertain to the functions of the Board:

- The Board, according to state statute, functions only as a unit when the Board is in formal session using Robert's Rules of Order.
- The Board will serve as the final authority within FTF to resolve any issue which cannot be resolved through regular administrative channels.
- The Board is the policymaking body of FTF.
- The Board will employ and evaluate on a regular basis the Chief Executive Officer.
- The Board will evaluate and act upon recommendations of the CEO in areas of governance, policy, programs, administration and budget.
- The Board working with the CEO, stakeholders and staff will periodically carry out a strategic planning process for FTF.
- The Board shall conduct at least six regular meetings per year, one of which shall determine the elected officers. The elected officers of the Board will be a chairman and vice-chair. In the absence of the chair from a meeting the vice-chair will preside. If the office of the chair becomes permanently vacant the vice-chair will act as chair until a new chair is elected before the second regular meeting following the vacancy.

II. Relationships of Board, Chief Executive Officer and Staff

Since all of the powers of the FTF Board are derived from state statutes individual Board members exercise authority over FTF policies, programs administration and budget only as they vote to take action at a legal meeting and in accordance with enabling state statute. At times, an individual Board member, including the chairman, will have power only when the Board, by vote, has delegated authority to him/her.

Delegation by the Board of its executive powers to the Chief Executive Officer provides him/her the authority to manage FTF within the Board's policies and state statute. The Board holds the CEO responsible for the administration of its policies, the execution of Board decisions, the operation of the internal organization, and for keeping the Board informed.

The Board as a whole and individual members will:

- Provide the CEO full administrative authority, holding him/her responsible for acceptable results.

- Hold all meetings of the Board in the presence of the CEO, except when his/her evaluation and contract matters are being discussed.
- Refer all inquiries and concerns to the CEO.
- Transact all of its official business with staff through the CEO unless otherwise arranged.

III. Standards for Board Members behavior and conduct of role.

Because the foundations for success as individuals and for our society as a whole lie in positive early childhood development and health and because membership on the FTF board is a challenging responsibility, the members of the Board subscribe to the following code.

Board members will:

- Honor the high responsibility which membership on the FTF board demands.
- Understand that the basic function of the FTF board is policy-making and not administrative.
- Represent the entire State of Arizona.
- Respect his/her relationships with other members of the Board.
- Respect the opinions of all other board members.
- Maintain positive relations with the CEO and the entire staff.

Adopted September 24, 2008, revised TO BE DETERMINED